

MONEY: THE KEY TO HAPPINESS?

Use this outline for a meeting to help kids understand why money can't buy happiness or peace.

1. Before the Meeting—

Decorate your meeting place with play money. Tape the money under chairs, behind pictures and on the ceiling, floor and walls. The money should cover the room. Buy or bake a cake with a happy face on the top.

2. Run for the Money

opener—After the kids arrive, point out the money scattered around the room and the cake. Then say: The goal of this game is to collect as much money as possible—whoever collects the most can “buy” this cake with his or her money. You can steal money from others, but torn bills will not be counted.

Say “go.” After two minutes, shout “stop” and have

kids sit down to count their money. Declare a winner, take his or her money and hand over the cake.

3. Have Your Cake and

Eat It Too?—Form a circle and ask the winner: How did you feel when you won? Did it make you happy? Why or why not? Ask everyone: How did you feel when you were scrambling to horde the money? How did you feel when someone tried to take your money? Were you disappointed you didn't win? Why or why not? How is this game similar to our society? different from our society? What rewards do the rich enjoy? What rewards do the poor enjoy? Can money buy happiness? Why or why not?

4. Can't Buy Me . . .

Form groups of three. Give each group some play money and markers. Tell half of the groups to brainstorm things money can buy and list them on separate play-money bills. Tell the other half of the groups to list things that money can't buy on their play

money. Have kids tape the bills listing things money can buy on one wall, and the bills listing things money can't buy on another wall.

Have kids read the bills on each wall. Then ask: What things on either wall can be taken away from you? What things can't be taken from you?

5. Money for Nothing Bible study

—Form groups of three or more. Give each group some finger paint, a piece of posterboard and one of the following scripture passages: Proverbs 11:28; Matthew 19:16-26; Acts 8:14-24; or James 5:1-6. Ask groups to each read their passage.

Say: Imagine your group is an advertising company and you're planning to design and distribute a poster that illustrates the message found in your scripture passage. Together, create that poster with the materials you've been given.

Form a circle and ask a representative from each group to display and explain the group's poster. Ask: Do you ever feel like the rich people these passages talk about? Is your poster's message valid for today? What's the difference between the world's riches and God's riches?

Read aloud Matthew 5:3-16. Ask: According to Jesus, what should bring happiness?

6. The Pursuit of Happiness closing

—Give group members each a pencil and a play-money bill. Again, read aloud Matthew 5:3-16. Ask kids to each choose one beatitude and write a paraphrase of it on their bill. Have kids read aloud their paraphrases for a closing prayer. Ask kids to keep their bills with them during the next week as a prayer reminder.

